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16 June 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr.

SUBJECT : Background on Agency Archives

1. Federal Law requires every Agency to permanently preserve certain of its records to document its activities and accomplishments. (Attached is a copy of the Public Law 754, 81st Congress, in which you may note that requirement in Section 506, paragraph (a) on page 9.) Whether or not the Agency has established a formal Archives function to preserve such permanent records, the requirement exists and must eventually be satisfied. Therefore, the proposal for a Support Directorate Information Management Center would be well advised to plan for the future and to meet Federal requirements, not merely aim to fill existing functions. Consequently, this paper is positive in its concern for Agency Archives and recommends DDS action whether or not any other Directorate acts similarly, or if this action (in accordance with Federal Law) is or is not sanctioned by a specific Agency Regulation. At present the Central Records Staff interprets HR to prescribe an Agency Archives Function.

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2. It is important that we keep clearly in mind the distinction between the History Staff and the Archives Staff. Historians are responsible to research and write about the past events of our organization. To do so they refer to permanent documents in the Archives and to temporary files in the Records Center or Offices as well as to their own personal experiences and those of other reliable individuals. To simplify their tasks the historians may issue guidance and requests for the inclusion of certain documents in files being retained. This may be treated as another administrative procedure and the requests honored. Such requests probably coincide with the requirements levied by professional Archivists and the necessary documentation may coincidentally be scheduled for Archival retention. But the Archives priority must be understood. The Archive documents must be preserved for use by many different types of historians and future citizens and are not to be accumulated to satisfy only today's whims, opinions, or needs. Likewise, Office files are to meet the needs and requirements of the operating office and the integrity of that file must not be defiled and raped by any historian to meet his immediate needs. A basic Archival principle is "respect des fonds" which demands that the original order and completeness of a group of official, permanent files be preserved to insure the integrity of those documents for future research and reference. Usually this involves only about 5% of an Agency's total records. Isolated selection, removal, and storage of individual documents and manuscripts loses the reliability of the contents or valuable related material and is more the function of a library or museum.

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3. Therefore, with these two points in mind -- continuing to extend the Agency Archives activity and having the Archives used by Historians but not subordinated to their temporary needs of today -- we can better respond to your draft of certain duties and responsibilities within the DDS Information Management Center:

- a. The role of the Directorate Archivist will be enhanced and simplified if the Agency formalizes and expands its concern for and attention to Agency Archives. But if the Agency does not, then the Archivist must still operate within the Support Directorate and merely work harder and be more knowledgeable, resourceful, and persuasive about Archival needs and procedures.
- b. Your point #1 places the primary emphasis and duty of the Archivist in the History Program. For several years now there have been dozens of Historians throughout DDS operating under the guidance and requirements of the Historical Staff and the supervision of a super-grade DDS Historian coordinator. I believe your point #1 should require the DDS Archivist to coordinate the Archives Program within the Offices of the Directorate and ensure that the permanent documents and related files are properly scheduled, the "Offices of Record" identified, and an effective procedure established for the current maintenance of those files and their careful retirement to the Records Center and eventual preservation in the Agency Archives.
- c. Your point #2 would violate the integrity of any official permanent file in other Directorates from which valuable documents are "retrieved" for historians in DDS and never returned. Is the word "screening" used in the sense of "examining" or "purging"? A screening examination being done is for the purpose of identifying whether or not a file meets the legal Archival requirements and its reliability intact. It is not screened for purging unless the office keeps poor files and duplicate or non-record and unrelated material is therein. When a DDS historian needs information on DDP activities related to the DDS History, the DDS historian goes and uses DDP complete, official, permanent files. We can not ask DDP to give its records to DDS nor should DDS start a duplicate of the DDP files. (It seems to me our DDS historians need Research Training and should stop expecting to be spoon fed.)

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It is essential that the Directorate Archivist maintain a very close liaison with the Records Management Program and so points #3 and #4 are well stated.

4. Although points #5, #6, and #7 are correct and should be stated, they more or less describe the qualifications and motivating actions of the Archivist. Hence, I believe they can be preceded by a few points more specific as to his duties, responsibilities, and "raison d'etre". I would suggest something concerning his value and contributions to the DDS Offices, the History Program, and to the Directorate Management Information Staff -- somewhat as follows:

- a. The Archivist is responsible to develop a Directorate "Records Retention Plan" which identifies the valuable, permanent records in DDS and specifies the "Office of Record" responsible for their accumulation, maintenance, and eventual retirement. This activity ensures the preservation of essential records of continuing value, eliminates confusion as to their location and safety, and permits disposal of all duplicate files.
- b. The continuing attention of the Archivist to all types of Agency records and development of related finding aids ensures the presence of a natural liaison and research channel for all future historians in the DDS. This service and expertise will expedite their work and provide information on nuggets of knowledge outside the historian's sphere and thereby guarantee a fuller, more reliable history of the Agency's accomplishments and evolution.
- c. The importance of information was always acknowledged but the related processing procedures have only recently begun to be appreciated by Agency management. Necessary controls and manpower are only now being assured. Typical are these plans for an integrated Information Management Staff. We must avoid a narrow or biased approach by this staff. It is essential that the modern systems designers and data processors, with their computer systems orientation, be guided in Agency Records Management by the presence on the staff of such basic and long-range orientations, as are found in the qualified Archivist and his related program of records management. His is a common sense approach to the fundamental systems requirements of Agency operations. His Records and Documentation objectives are fundamental. Such simple demands as column heading translations and code dictionaries will be a responsibility he will police throughout the previously neglected documentation of DDS ADP projects. Disposition plans for input and output as well as for their more efficient formatting, storage, and retrieval will be other essential duties and services upon which this Archivist and his Records Managers will coordinate in an effort to improve the efficiency and economy of the automated and miniaturized systems.

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Staffing Requirement

Directorate Archivist GS-14/13

Although attached to the DDS Information Processing Staff the incumbent will be assigned for duty in the Agency Archives. The professional archivist must have primary competence in the following:

- a. Records Appraisal and Disposition. This involves analysis and evaluation of Agency records to determine their continuing value and to advise or make decisions regarding their ultimate disposition. This requires a knowledge of the history, organization, and operations of the Agency as well as an understanding of the legislative responsibilities of the Agency and its records plus the needs of the scholarly community.
- b. Archival Records Arrangement and Description. This essential ability provides for the systematic storage and retrieval of the material and the bringing of related material together in logical order with adequate finding aids to facilitate reference.

Secondary skills should relate to the several responsibilities necessary to the success of the other units and programs in the DDS Information Management Staff such as the:

Records Management Staff
Historical Writers
Information Processing
Plans and Analysis
Systems Management, development and design

Assistant DDS Archivist GS-12/11

This assistant will provide administrative support and back up the continuing liaison and program activities during the absence of the Archivist. This incumbent will provide a continuity and depth of coverage in this increasingly important function.

CIA Records Administration Officer

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